

## Byron Russell & Monte Caldwell

# Connecting the Dots

**M**eeting with Byron Russell and Monte Caldwell is a bit like visiting with the mayor. The two greet multiple passers-by as we sit sipping lattes at the Ebar outside Nordstrom City Creek. Caldwell is the epitome of waspy chic in saddle shoes and signature bow tie; Russell, in between meetings with various state and city government officials, is more formal but just as stylish in a Beckett & Robb grey suit and crisp Oxford shirt.

Panache is an apt descriptor of these two, not only in terms of how they dress but their shared passion for good food, entertainment and art.

But that's only part of the story. The undeniable substance these two bring to the community they love through Byron Russell, LLC much more succinctly defines this personal and professional duo.

"Government doesn't get things done, people do," says Russell, whose namesake consulting firm provides far-reaching solutions serving seemingly incongruent interests: big business and the underrepresented. "It takes the private sector to help a community grow and change. My role is to help generous people find a way to accomplish that change," Russell says. CEO positioning and philanthropic audits are among the services provided by Byron Russell, LLC. A more plainspoken way of describing what they do is this: helping companies serve the communities in which they do business, thereby maximizing their return on investment for the greater good. For example, last summer Byron Russell, LLC facilitated a relationship between Chevron and the University of Utah College of Science, resulting in Chevron contributing \$240,000 to the ACCESS Program for Women in Science and Mathematics. Others on the firm's distinguished client roster include Adobe, the Christian Center of Park City and the LaPorte Group. At the heart of Byron Russell, LLC is the vast relationship capital Russell has accumulated since moving to the Beehive State in 1992, and Caldwell's firsthand knowledge of how business is done in Utah's capitol city.

Russell's career began in the late 1980s at the British House of Commons where his assignments included assisting the Namibian Transitional Government

secure independence. His dual degree in journalism and politics next launched a stint at the Washington Post, followed by a position as a political reporter with the Washington Times. While on a road trip through the Southwest, Russell decided to drive north through Utah. "I saw the city tucked up against these green, snow-capped mountains and decided Salt Lake City was where I wanted to be," Russell says. Since then his career has included leading development efforts for the Utah Symphony, being a Zions Bank-loaned executive at the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce and a five-year tenure as vice president of development for Western Governors University. Now, in addition to heading up Byron Russell, LLC, he serves on multiple boards and is co-chair of the Utah Multi-Cultural Commission, an entity reaching minority populations statewide to improve economic development, education, health and corrections. "Nothing we do is politically driven. The network I've built over the years here spans business, arts, recreation and hospitality. It's my job to bring together the contributions and needs of that network to make a positive impact," he says.

Russell met Caldwell (a Utah native) soon after arriving in Utah, and the two have been a couple ever since. Caldwell's professional background includes serving as a financial analyst and in administration for the Pohlads Companies, Fidelity Investments and Morris Travel. He became managing partner for Byron Russell, LLC in 2011, utilizing his broad financial sector experience to manage the firm's "back of the house" operations. "I put together the nuts and bolts part of the business," Caldwell says. Along with numbers, the arts have always held a special place in Caldwell's heart as well. He studied piano performance at the University of Utah and

was a volunteer with the Salt Lake County Fine Arts Division. As such, Caldwell finds Byron Russell, LLC's commitment to the arts particularly gratifying. "This business isn't about correlating a specific task with a fee," Caldwell says. "It's about connecting the dots, which is very rewarding for me."

One of Russell and Caldwell's latest projects is the Edison Quarter, an area just off State Street between 200 and 300 South. "We're working with the city and a variety of non-profits to create a master planned commercial district focused on art, food, film and

fashion," Russell says. Last fall, Russell and Caldwell hosted Dining on Edison, an event featuring locally-grown produce, much of which was sourced through New Roots, a program allowing refugees to grow and sell produce specific to their homeland. "Utah's refugees have talents and culture that brings much more value and richness to our community than we can ever give back to them," Russell says.

Mutually beneficial solutions is another way to encapsulate what Russell and Caldwell do—a crusade they are embarking upon one dinner party at a time.

